

Canadian Pharmacists Association

The Canadian Pharmacists Association posted to its website *Concerns with the Cross-Border Prescription Drug Trade in 2004*. This document addresses specific concerns, including:

- That the cross-border drug trade could cause or exacerbate several problems, including causing drug prices in Canada to rise.
- Having a negative impact on the pharmaceutical supply chain in Canada.
- Negatively affecting the provision of services to Canadian patients as more pharmacists are dedicated to filling prescriptions and providing care to patients located outside of Canada.
- That some Internet sites operate illegally and services are not provided by accredited pharmacies, which bypass the comprehensive safety system of drug approval, prescription requirements and pharmacy practice standards.
- That some pharmacies operating an Internet pharmacy service may not be in compliance with medical and pharmacy standards of practice.
- That the professional ethics of some practices is questionable.
- That the drug distribution process may be compromised.
- That pharmacies providing cross-border prescription services are facing increased challenges in obtaining stock of some products.
- That prescriptions are often faxed, and could be faxed to multiple online pharmacies, thereby increasing the potential for drug diversion and illicit drug use.

- And that the growing number of Canadian pharmacies exporting prescription drugs and the co-signing practices of physicians is creating regulatory and resource challenges for provincial pharmacy and medical licensing authorities.

The full text of these concerns and contact information for regulatory authorities in Canada can be obtained on the Canadian Pharmacists Association website, www.pharmacists.ca.

Purchases

The responsibilities of the Clearinghouse include purchasing medications from suspected “rogue” websites and pursuing complaints against associated physicians and pharmacists. Clearinghouse staff placed and received one order for medication in the fourth quarter of 2005. Overall, staff has placed 50 orders, with 46 being approved.

www.cheap-online-pharmacy-usa.com

An order for Tamiflu was placed and received in December. The pharmacy is located in Utah, the website based in India, and the prescribing physician licensed in Puerto Rico.

News of Interest

- Christopher Pudol, D.O., was indicted by a federal grand jury in early October 2005, for the unlawful distribution of controlled substances outside the scope of professional practice and not for a legitimate medical purpose. Dr. Pudol allegedly issued prescriptions for controlled sub-

stances (including Oxycontin, Lortab, Xanax, and Hydrocodone) based on Internet questionnaires he received from consumers accessing his website.

- Immigration and Customs Enforcement Agents seized more than 50 shipments of counterfeit Tamiflu within the past few months. The counterfeit drugs, labeled as generic Tamiflu, had none of the actual ingredients of the antiviral medication. These packages were being shipped to customers who had placed orders over the Internet.
- A Food and Drug Administration (FDA) operation named “Operation Bait and Switch” found that nearly half of the imported drugs FDA intercepted from four selected countries were shipped to fill orders that consumers believed they were placing with Canadian pharmacies. Of the drugs being promoted as Canadian, based on accompanying documentation, 85 percent actually came from 27 countries around the globe. A number of these products were found to be counterfeit. The press release for this operation, dated Dec. 16, 2005, is available on the FDA website, www.fda.gov.
- The Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) recently announced indictments against eight Mexican manufacturers accused of selling illicit steroids online to Americans. These indictments were the result of “Operation Gear Grinder”, a 21-month Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force investigation. Approximately 82 percent of all DEA-seized and analyzed steroids in the U.S. are manufactured in Mexico, and a large majority of those come from one of these eight manufacturers. Operation Gear Grinder is a part of the Virtual Enforcement Initiative, a coordinated DEA effort to target illegal Internet drug trafficking. A complete press release, dated Dec. 15, 2005, is available on the DEA website at www.usdoj.gov/dea.

Disciplinary Actions

The following is a partial list of recent disciplinary actions taken against physicians who prescribed medicine via the Internet.

- Medical Board of California—Ahsan Rashid, M.D., license revoked on Oct. 20, 2005, but stayed the revocation and placed respondent on five years probation.
- Arizona Medical Board—Scott Weiss, M.D., letter of reprimand on Oct. 12, 2005, for prescribing a prescription-only medication on the Internet.
- Kentucky Board of Medical Licensure—Arturo Portales, D.O., license revoked on Sept. 22, 2005, for violating the terms of his “Agreed Order of Indefinite Restriction and Fine” entered into on May 15, 2002. Dr. Portales plead guilty to conspiracy to distribute and dispense controlled substances via the Internet.

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